

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, ET

SUBJECT: SAUDI INTEREST IN DEVELOPMENTS IN HORN OF AFRICA

REFS: A) JIDDA 2434; B) STATE 272148 (1974)

1. THE FOLLOWING HAVE BEEN THE PRINCIPAL ETHIOPIAN
DEVELOPMENTS SINCE REF B WAS DRAFTED:

2. INTERNAL RADICALISM AND PRAGMATISM: NATIONALIZATION
OF MANY BUSINESSES AND ALL RURAL AND URBAN LANDS HAS
SHOWN PROVISIONAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT'S (PMG) DOCTRINAL
AIM TO BE RADICAL TRANSFORMATION OF ETHIOPIAN SOCIETY.
FIRST STEPS TO BEGIN NARROWING SPREAD IN INCOME AMONG
SALARIED CLASSES ARE SAID TO BE IMMINENT. ALTHOUGH FAIRLY
ADVANCED FORM OF SOCIALISM APPEARS TO BE OBJECTIVE, PMG
HAS SHOWN ITSELF PRAGMATIC ENOUGH NOT TO PUSH FOR
IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES WHERE THEY ENCOUNTER
DETERMINED RESISTANCE.

3. WEAKENING CONTROL OF PMG: DISSIDENCE IS WIDESPREAD
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THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. IN ADDITION TO THE STALEMATED

INSURGENCY IN ERITREA THERE HAS BEEN ARMED RESISTANCE TO THE PMG IN MANY OTHER PROVINCES, SOME OF IT FAIRLY CONSTANT AS IN NORTHWEST OF COUNTRY AND OTHER INSTANCES MORE SPORADIC

IN NATURE. ALTHOUGH KNOWN INSTANCES ARE NUMEROUS THERE IS NO CONNECTING ELEMENT IN MOST CASES AND RESISTORS ARE DISPARATE AND WEAK. THE PMG IS PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH DISSIDENT GROUPS SUPPORTED FROM ABROAD. THIS INCLUDES THE ERITREANS; THE AFARS WHO HAVE HAD CONTACT WITH THE ERITREAN INSURGENTS, AND SOMALIA; THE DISSIDENTS IN THE OGADEN SAID TO BE ENCOURAGED AND ARMED BY SOMALIA; AND THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION (EDU), AN EXILE-LED RESISTANCE MOVEMENT. THIS DISSIDENCE WILL PROBABLY NOT RESULT IN DOWNFALL OF PMG IN NEAR FUTURE BUT COULD CONTRIBUTE TO GRADUAL EROSION OF ITS AUTHORITY. IN ADDITION THERE ARE STILL REPORTS OF DISSATISFACTION WITHIN MILITARY WITH CERTAIN ACTIONS AND METHODS OF OPERATION OF RULING PROVISIONAL MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL (PMAC).

4. INCREASING THIRD WORLDISM: PMG IS ANXIOUS TO IMPROVE ITS THIRD WORLD CREDENTIALS AND DISTINGUISH ITSELF FROM THE REGIME OF HAILE SELASSIE WHICH IT CONSIDERS ONLY PAID LIP SERVICE TO NON-ALIGNMENT. MOST OBVIOUS EXAMPLE OF THIS FOR US HAS BEEN ITS SWITCH FROM ABSTENTION TO AN OUTRIGHT UNFRIENDLY POSITION ON KOREAN ISSUE IN UN. ANOTHER EXAMPLE WAS RECOGNITION OF MPLA IN ANGOLA WHICH PRECIPITATED OAU RECOGNITION. CONTINUED DEPENDENCE ON US FOR ARMS IS PROBABLY HIGHLY AGGRAVATING TO PMG GIVEN THIS INCLINATION; US MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP MAY EVEN PUSH PMG TOWARD BEING MORE NON-ALIGNED THAN IT WOULD NORMALLY BE IN ORDER TO COUNTERACT THIS US CONNECTION. POSSIBILITY OF SUBSTITUTING USSR AS ARMS SUPPLIER IS MINIMAL IN VIEW OF SOVIET COMMITMENT IN SOMALIA AND TEMPORARY WEAKENING EFFECT SUCH A CHANGEOVER WOULD HAVE ON ETHIOPIAN MILITARY JUST AT TIME PMG NEEDS ALL THE STRENGTH IT CAN MUSTER IN ERITREA AND TO FACE SOMALI THREAT, WHICH HAS BECOME MORE SERIOUS BECAUSE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN FTAI. MEDIA OUTPUT HAS RECENTLY TURNED EVEN MORE "ANTI-IMPERIALIST."

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5. INCREASED POLITICAL REPRESSION: WAVE OF ARRESTS WHICH BEGAN IN FEBRUARY HAS RESULTED IN AT LEAST HUNDREDS MORE POLITICAL PRISONERS, MOST OF THESE FROM MIDDLE CLASS OR ASSOCIATED WITH FORMER REGIME. PREVIOUS WAVE OF ARRESTS IN SEPTEMBER HAD ROLLED UP MUCH OF LEFTIST LABOR UNION OPPOSITION TO PMG. ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN NO MORE REPORTED SUMMARY EXECUTIONS, SINCE NOVEMBER 1974,

OF POLITICAL PRISONERS ARRESTED FOR THEIR TRANSGRESSIONS
UNDER OLD REGIME THERE HAVE BEEN DEATH SENTENCES CARRIED
OUT FOR ACTIONS AGAINST PMG AND SEVERAL PROMINENT PERSONS
HAVE BEEN KILLED WHILE ALLEGEDLY RESISTING ARREST. THERE

IS LITTLE NEWS OF PROGRESS OF TRIALS OF THOSE DETAINED
SINCE MARCH OF 1974. A FEW PRISONERS HAVE BEEN RELEASED.

6. SLOW DECISION MAKING PROCESS: THE COMPETING FACTIONS
WITHIN PMAC AND ITS CONCERN FOR SURVIVAL HAVE RESULTED IN
A SLOWDOWN IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN MANY AREAS.
AMBASSADORIAL APPOINTMENTS, COMPENSATION FOR NATIONALIZED
PROPERTY, FORMULATION OF DEVELOPMENT PLANS, ETC., ARE
LAGGING.

7. EXTERNAL CONCERNS: THE FUTURE INDEPENDENCE OF
DJIBOUTI IS NOT CALCULATED TO CALM THE PMAC'S NERVES.
THEY REALIZE THAT THEIR MILITARY COMMITMENTS IN ERITREA
AND ELSEWHERE LEAVE THEM LITTLE IN THE WAY OF DIS-
POSABLE FORCES WITH WHICH TO FACE A SOMALI THREAT IN THAT
AREA. THIS ACKNOWLEDGED LOCAL WEAKNESS MAY, HOWEVER, MAKE
THEM ALL THE MORE READY TO TAKE PREEMPTIVE ACTION TO
BETTER EXPLOIT THE LIMITED FORCES THEY DO HAVE. PMAC MAY
ALSO BELIEVE A FIGHT WITH SOMALIA COULD LEAD TO THE SAME
KIND OF UPSURGE OF SUPPORT FOR PMG THAT OCCURRED EARLY
LAST YEAR FOLLOWING OUTBREAK OF HEAVY FIGHTING IN ERITREA.

8. US POSITION: WE CONTINUE TO PLACE VALUE ON A COOPERA-
TIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH ETHIOPIA AND STABILITY IN HORN
IN VIEW OF THE AREA'S STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE. OUR CONTINU-
ING ASSISTANCE TO PMG, DESPITE ITS FREQUENTLY UNCOOPERATIVE
ATTITUDE, IS EVIDENCE OF OUR DESIRE AND WILLINGNESS TO
WORK FOR SUCH A RELATIONSHIP.

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9. ADDIS ABABA MAY WISH TO SEND ITS COMMENTS DIRECTLY
TO JIDDA.

10. ABOVE MAY BE SHARED WITH SAG AT POST'S DISCRETION. KISSINGER

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